

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- + Secretary-General meets with President Clinton in Washington, D.C.; discussion covers situations in Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, Mozambique, Haiti and Yemen.
- + Rwandan Government and RPF to begin cease-fire talks on Monday; UNAMIR oversees transfers of 480 civilians at risk to secure areas in Kigali.
- + Secretary-General recommends that Security Council extend UNAVEM II for three months, with structure and mandate unchanged; says Angolan Government and UNITA are within reach of comprehensive peace agreement.
- + Speakers tell Human Rights Commission that international community failed to prevent massacres in Rwanda despite evidence of impending disaster.
- + General Assembly authorizes Secretary-General to commit \$89 million to maintain UNIFIL, UNDOF, UNOMIG and Military Liaison Team in Cambodia.
- + UNHCR calls for international ban on production, use and sale of anti-personnel land-mines.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today had a "very constructive and positive" meeting with United States President Bill Clinton in Washington, D.C., according to a United Nations spokesman. They discussed peace-keeping operations around the world, and the situations in Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, Mozambique and Haiti. The Secretary-General also apprised the President of his efforts to bring the parties in Yemen to the negotiating table.

The Secretary-General was scheduled to meet this afternoon with Yemen's Ambassador to the United States, the spokesman continued. In the last 24 hours, he had been in contact with Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United

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States and with the Foreign Minister of Yemen. Tomorrow, the Secretary-General would address the Commencement ceremony of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

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During talks yesterday with Assistant Secretary-General Iqbal Riza, the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) agreed to meet on Monday to begin discussions on a possible cease-fire, according to a United Nations spokesman. The meeting -- the first such face-to-face encounter between the two sides -- will be chaired by the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), Romeo Dallaire.

Meanwhile, the Force Commander today supervised the transfers of a total of 480 civilians at risk to secure areas in Kigali, the spokesman said. That operation is expected to continue tomorrow.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) be extended for three months, with its structure and mandate unchanged. However, in a report dated 24 May, he said the Security Council might reconsider the Mission's future if peace talks in Lusaka did not soon produce the expected positive results. He urged the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to show the flexibility needed for a comprehensive political agreement. Despite the slow progress at the talks, national reconciliation issues could be resolved with the right political will, he stressed.

The Secretary-General said that in the event of a peace agreement being concluded in Lusaka, the Council should be ready to decide immediately on the strengthening of the United Nations presence in Angola. He reiterated that the necessary logistical and financial resources would have to be forthcoming.

The Secretary-General expressed concern at the continued fighting in Angola and the resulting civilian suffering. He said military actions should cease immediately so that humanitarian operations could resume, and appealed to the parties to guarantee the safety of relief workers. He also appealed to Member States to support those operations and to be ready to provide further support in the event of a peace agreement.

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The international community failed to prevent the current wave of massacres in Rwanda despite evidence of impending disaster, representatives of non-government organizations told the Commission on Human Rights on Wednesday. As the Commission continued its special session on Rwanda, the International Commission of Jurists said the world had failed to end human rights violations which had been denounced for years at the United Nations.

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Amnesty International accused the Commission of contributing to the international failure to act in Rwanda. The Commission's own Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions had made 12 detailed recommendations following his mission to that country last year. Yet one month before the current wave of killings, the Commission had failed to ensure that the Rwandan Government implemented those measures.

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The General Assembly yesterday authorized the Secretary-General to commit almost \$89 million gross for the maintenance of various United Nations peace-keeping operations. It took that action by adopting five draft resolutions submitted by the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

The Assembly authorized spending of almost \$12 million gross per month for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for six months from 1 August; \$2.7 million monthly for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) from 1 June to 30 November; \$300,000 monthly for the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) from 1 July to 31 October; and \$900,000 for the United Nations Military Liaison Team in Cambodia for six months from 15 November.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has called for an international ban on the production, use and sale of anti-personnel land-mines. A UNHCR official said yesterday that the increasing indiscriminate and unrecorded use of anti-personnel land-mines was inhumane, and had far-reaching consequences for civilians, including refugees and returnees. In the absence of such a ban, the 1980 "inhumane weapons" Convention should be altered to cover internal conflicts. Those who produced or laid land-mines should be responsible for clearing them, and keeping records of mine-laying such as maps should be mandatory.

An estimated 100 million mines are scattered around the world, with another 2 million laid each year, according to the UNHCR. Clearance is dangerous and extremely expensive. The presence of mines seriously impedes the repatriation and reintegration of refugees in countries such as Mozambique, Somalia, Cambodia and Afghanistan. Some 20,000 civilians have been killed and 400,000 wounded by land-mines in Afghanistan in the past 15 years. In Cambodia, between 8 and 10 million mines have made huge areas of land unusable and hindered reconstruction and development.

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